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BRIEFS

NATCHEZ IS FOCUS FOR DISASTER ASSESSMENT

JACKSON, Ms. (Special). — The Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief Task Force has dispatched an assessment team to inspect tornado damage in the Natchez area after reports indicated a tornado moved through the area Nov. 1. Shane McGivney, director of men's ministry at the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board and coordinator of the Task Force, said reports of up to 30 locations in need of chainsaw and debris removal teams prompted the Task Force to seek a formal assessment. No timetable was available for completion of the assessment. McGivney also said Mississippi Baptist teams remain in Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina after Hurricanes Florence and Michael.

ARKANSANS APPROVE EXPANDED GAMBLING

JONESBORO, Ark. (BP) — Arkansas voters approved an expansion of casino gambling on election day even though messengers to the 2018 annual meeting of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention just days before expressed their opposition to allowing casinos to move beyond Hot Springs and West Memphis to four additional counties. Messenger further committed to restore and rehabilitate individuals involved in problem gambling and provide a "safety net" for gamblers' families and communities if Arkansas Ballot Issue 4 was approved.

HANKINS TO RETIRE FROM LBC POSTING

RUSTON, La. (BP) — David Hankins, executive director of the Louisiana Baptist Convention (LBC) since 2005, announced his plans to retire, effective June 30 of next year, during the pre-convention meeting of the convention's Executive Board Nov. 12 in Ruston. He is a California native who was raised in Texas, and is a graduate of Dallas Baptist University as well as Southwestern Seminary, where he earned both masters and doctoral degrees. His son Eric is a former senior pastor of First Church, Oxford.

Chitwood tapped to head IMB

RICHMOND, Va. (BP and local reports) — Paul Chitwood, executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention (KBC), is the trustee's choice to be the next president of the International Mission Board (IMB) of the Southern Baptist Convention.

He replaces David Platt, who asked trustees in February to begin their search for the next president of the 173-year-old missions entity in order for Platt to return to pastoral ministry.

Chitwood, age 48, a former chairman of the IMB board of trustees, was elected to the top post during the Nov. 15 plenary session of the trustee's meeting at IMB headquarters in Richmond, Va. He had been the leader of Kentucky Baptists since 2011.

"It is so obvious that God has been preparing Paul for this role in so many ways," said Madison resident Rick Dunbar, IMB trustee chairman and a member of the search committee. "Examine his work history, denominational experience, trustee background, educational history, leadership and team-building history. Hear his heart for missions and the Lord, to be shared with the entire world. Listen to his wife as she eagerly anticipates this role and I think you will agree: We need him."

Dunbar, a physician, said the more the search committee

see IMB on p. 6



CHITWOOD

Blasphemy acquittal results in angry mobs

LAHORE, Pakistan (BP) — Christian mother Asia Bibi's freedom in Pakistan is once again in jeopardy, just days after that country's Supreme Court acquitted her of blasphemy and freed her from death row.

The government is allowing her detractors to request a review of the Oct. 31 acquittal and are forbidding Bibi to leave the country, British newspaper The Guardian reported Nov. 2. Angry mobs of thousands in several cities are demanding her death. The nation was said to be paralyzed by street mobs for three days after the verdict, inciting fears of civil war.

While Bibi's exact location remains undisclosed, the government is putting Bibi's life at risk by forbidding her to leave the country, her supporters say. Pakistani Muslim extremists are known to kill people in Bibi's situation in extrajudicial actions.

Bibi supporter Maulana Sami ul Haq was stabbed

see ACQUITTAL on p. 6



BIBI

Stage set for political warfare in D.C.



SPLIT CONGRESS — Following the Nov. 6 elections, voters returned control of the U.S. House of Representatives to the Democratic Party while the Republican Party maintained control of the U.S. Senate. (BP illustration)

WASHINGTON (BP and local reports) — Voters returned control of the U.S. House of Representatives to the Democratic Party in Nov. 6 balloting, but they also likely strengthened the Republican Party's hold on the U.S. Senate's ability to confirm conservative U.S. Supreme Court justices and federal judges.

Democrats soon to be in control of the House have vowed to use their power to disrupt the governing plans of Republican U.S. President Donald Trump and his political party.

Republicans lost their majority in the House for the first time since the 2010 election during former U.S. President Barack Obama's first term. Democrats held a 222-199 advantage with

see POLITICS on p. 7

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From the editor

WILLIAM PERKINS

A Thanksgiving prayer

Among the original American holidays on our calendar, Thanksgiving often harbors our warmest thoughts and deepest sentimentalities.

The World Book Encyclopedia describes it this way: "Thanksgiving is usually a family day, celebrated with big dinners and joyous reunions. The very mention of Thanksgiving often calls up memories of kitchens and pantries crowded with good things to eat. Thanksgiving is also a time for serious thinking, church services, and prayer."

Indeed it is. In our present-day, politically correct/revisionist culture, we can be discouraged from understanding the true meaning of the holiday. We have lately been induced to believe that Thanksgiving is composed of little more than a bacchanalian orgy and football games, devoid of religious significance. After all, a lot of Americans act that way.

Nothing could be farther from the truth, as evidenced by a brief review of unrevised history. The first Thanksgiving was observed less than a year after the Plymouth colonists came ashore in Massachusetts. The harsh first winter in the New World wiped out nearly half the colonists, but 1621's bumper harvest put an end to the famine and its associated problems.

There was such rejoicing in the colony that the people began to set aside a time of celebration and thanksgiving for their abundance, which they readily acknowledged came from God.

The observance grew so rapidly that Massachusetts Governor William Bradford declared a formal three-day thanksgiving feast to begin on July 30, 1623. Thanksgiving quickly took root in the other colonies and continued to be observed during the Revolutionary War.

After the Revolutionary War, President George Washington issued a proclamation that codified a special day of thanks in the young United States of America. Most of the states took Washington's lead and adopted their own days of thanksgiving at various times of the year.

In 1863, President Abraham Lincoln declared a national Thanksgiving holiday on the last Thursday of November, and the states soon realigned their observances.

President Franklin Roosevelt in 1939 set the holiday one week earlier to lengthen the Christmas shopping season in the midst of the Great Depression. The U.S. Congress was not pleased, however, and voted in 1941 to return Thanksgiving to the traditional fourth Thursday in November. They backed up their decision by creating a formal legal holiday on that date.

For thousands of years, people around the world have held harvest festivals and observed thanksgiving times for the gift of God's bounty, but the unique American holiday called Thanksgiving should hold special meaning for us, the modern-day beneficiaries of God's blessings beyond all forms of measurement.

Our agricultural system feeds us well, with enough left over to feed much of the world. More than at any time in history, our generation is sheltered from the elements and guarded from disease.

Though our military is stretched and many brave men and women are giving their lives even today for our freedoms, we are largely protected from many of the unpleasant realities of the world. When our biggest complaints are about potholes and poorly performing football teams, we're living pretty close to Easy Street.

We make a grave mistake, however, when we take all that for granted and begin to believe we deserve the credit for our own good fortune and security (Deut. 8:6-19), as many Americans apparently assume.

This Thanksgiving season, be sure to focus your thanks toward the One who provided the food you will eat, the home in which you will enjoy it, the family with which you will enjoy it, the means to do all that, and much more.

Come to think of it, that should be our Thanksgiving prayer 365 days a year.



The poppy principle

November 11 marked the 100th anniversary of the end of World War I, known until World War II as "The Great War."

The world mourned the loss of approximately 20 million military personnel and civilians during The Great War. Many began wearing red poppies to commemorate the fallen. Why did they choose this flower as their symbol of mourning the lost?

Canadian doctor John McCrae penned a famous poem, *In Flanders Fields*, during the conflict in which he wrote, *In Flanders fields the poppies blow between the crosses, row on row.*

Many soldiers realized during the war that where combat had been the worst, poppies filled the fields. Poppy seeds have the ability to remain dormant for many years. A poppy flower can generate 60,000 seeds that remain dormant for up to 100 years, according to some botanists.

After the brutal battles of Ypres in France and Belgium in 1914 and 1915, trenching and bombing had destroyed most of the vegetation and churned up the soil.

Poppies thrive in an environment where other vegetation has been eliminated, and after the fighting and loss of thousands upon thousands of lives, the poppies came out of dormancy and grew and thrived, creating the beautiful natural phenomenon in the midst of one of humanity's worst nightmares.

McCrae, thinking of lost friends and the ongoing fight, finished his poem by writing:

*Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
the torch; be yours to hold it high.
If you break faith with us who die,
we shall not sleep, though poppies grow
in Flanders fields.*

McCrae joined the list of war casualties when he died from sickness in 1918, but the poppies lived on.

What a picture of the Lord's work during times of great personal tragedy and loss!

In Sutherland Springs, Texas, 26 people were murdered just over a year ago in the deadliest church shooting



Guest opinion
with
Sara Dixon Young

in U.S. history. Baptist Press reported that though many people there are still working through the grieving process, the Lord is working in the life of the community.

The church used to have about 40 attendees, but now attendance averages 200. Some of those are people who became Christians because of the love of Jesus that evidenced itself in the lives of Christians enduring personal tragedy.

Throughout Scripture, we can see the poppy principle at work. When Abraham consented to sacrifice his only son, he learned that God provides. When Jacob wrestled with God, God blessed him. When Moses abandoned his calling, God met him at the burning bush.

When Gideon was hiding in a wine press to thresh grain, the angel came with God's plan of deliverance. When David stood against Goliath, God delivered him. When Elijah felt defeated and alone, God sustained him.

In times of tragedy, loss, and despair, the Lord has repeatedly proven that He sustains us, grows us, and multiplies us. In fact, times of adversity prove to be the times He often chooses to create the most spiritual growth in our lives.

Poppies bloomed among the slaughter in Flanders fields, God's reminder that beauty does rise from the ashes when we trust His goodness in bad times.

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John M. Perkins: Keep the Gospel at the forefront

NEW ORLEANS (BP and local reports) — To achieve true racial reconciliation in the church, Gospel proclamation must remain the central theme, Mississippian John M. Perkins said in a daylong visit to New Orleans Seminary (NOBTS).

A Christian minister and leader in the racial reconciliation movement among evangelicals, Perkins directs the John M. Perkins Foundation for Reconciliation and Development in Jackson. A survivor of extreme violence and tragedy in his home state during the civil rights movement, Perkins authored *Let Justice Roll Down*, a classic 1976 volume which charts his conversion to Christianity and how the power of the Gospel positions the church for racial reconciliation.

He is the recipient of the 2015 John Leland Award from the Southern Baptist Convention's Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission in Nashville. The award is named in memory of Baptist minister John Leland (1754-1841), an abolitionist who strongly advocated for religious freedom during the formative years of the United States.

As Christians band together around the Gospel's reconciliation between God and man, Perkins said, racial reconciliation should come naturally and he is hopeful that the current generation will make great strides in bringing it about.

NOBTS President Chuck Kelley and professor Page Brooks interacted with Perkins on a wide range of topics during and October chapel service. Later that day Brooks led a question-and-answer session with Perkins on the changes needed for lasting reconciliation in the church. Perkins also met with members of the Reconcile organization, a group of students from different ethnic backgrounds seeking to en-

courage racial reconciliation efforts at the seminary and in local churches.

Perkins made it clear during his visit that the primary task of the church is to proclaim the Good News that Jesus came to forgive sins and save the lost but, he noted, racial reconciliation is closely related to Gospel proclamation. A watching world looks at the church to see how Christians love one another, he noted.

"Our problem is a lack of passion. Our problem is a lack of gratitude for that Good News," Perkins said.

He warned against spending too much time diagnosing the problem but failing to find solutions.

Throughout the day, he focused on positive steps for reconciliation rather than critiquing failures. "God forgives the past. He justifies the past. We have got to begin to begin. I'm saying this morning that we are beginning to begin."

"It is time for some of us to come together and take the initiative."

Perkins called attention to an African American family with four young children near the front of the chapel, saying he wanted to set a good example of racial reconciliation for those children and ultimately to a watching world.

"We have got to be exemplary," Perkins urged. He turned to Kelley and said, "You and I have got something to prove to them. They will know that we are Christians by our love, by our behavior."

Asked to share his testimony, Perkins said he came to know Christ as Savior as an adult. He grew up in Mississippi during the Jim Crow era and said the Perkins family was known as bootleggers and gamblers.

No one in his family was religious — much less Christian, he said — but after his brother was killed in a racially motivated in-



RACE TALK — Mississippian John M. Perkins (center) dialogues about racial reconciliation and the Gospel with New Orleans Seminary President Chuck Kelley (right) and professor Page Brooks during a chapel service Oct. 25. (BP photo courtesy of NOBTS)

cident, Perkins moved to California where he was introduced to the Gospel when someone invited his son to church.

"When he came home from church, I saw joy in him and he would sing this song, 'Good News, Good News; Christ died for me,'" Perkins recounted. "Then he came home singing, 'Jesus loves the little children, all the children of the world; red, brown, yellow, black, and white; they're all precious in his sight.'"

Perkins had experienced something different in the Jim Crow South where churches typically barred black people, he said, and because of that he always assumed that Jesus did not die for people like him. The songs his son brought home ultimately led Perkins to church where he heard the Gospel and sought the love and forgiveness of God through Jesus.

"The rest of it was God — saved by grace, through faith," Perkins attested.

Ten years after Perkins came to faith in Christ and moved back to Mississippi, he endured an experience that could have left him bitter and broken. Jailed in 1970 for his civil rights protests in Mendenhall, Perkins endured beatings and torture by white law enforcement officials. He was tempted with despair and hate but prayed to God.

"I said, 'Lord, Lord, if You will let me out of this jail tonight, I want to preach a Gospel that is stronger than my blackness, stronger than my economic drive. I want to preach a Gospel that will reconcile us together [but] I got out of that jail and I wanted to reject it all. I wanted to keep the hatred. I wanted to become a victim.'"

Hospitalized for his injuries, it was the love and care by white doctors that helped Perkins forgive those who beat him and keep his commitment to God.

"We need each other," Perkins said. "Salvation is by the grace of God. It's God's initiative, and reconciliation is the very presence of Him. It's not a side issue, it's the mission. God is in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself and in us, so we can be a reconciling force."

At age 88, Perkins said he plans to be part of the solution. According to NOBTS leaders and Perkins, the chapel and Q&A session were the first of what they hope to be an ongoing collaboration.

Editor's note: John M. Perkins is not related to the editor of The Baptist Record, William H. Perkins Jr.

First Person: Have you wondered what God looks like?

By Lynn H. Pryor
Correspondent

NASHVILLE (BP) — Thanks to research, we have an idea what God looks like and He looks a lot like you. Psychologists at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill surveyed 551 Christians and asked, "What do you think God looks like?"



PRYOR

Not surprisingly, they saw God like they see themselves. If God looks like us, then the American God would look like a composite of 50 faces that represent the collective demographics of the U.S. population.

Caucasians pictured a white God. African Americans saw a dark-skinned God. Liberals saw God as younger, more feminine, and more loving. Young adults also saw a younger God. Conservatives saw God as more powerful.

This picture of God is nothing new. We've always been

guilty of creating God in our own image. That makes life easier for us. If God is already like us, we don't really have to change our lives, do we?

Of course, I know God looks nothing like me. Being created in His image (Gen. 1:26-27) has absolutely nothing to do with physical characteristics. Instead, my goal is to become more and more like Him. God has called me to be conformed to the image of His Son (Rom. 8:29).

I take this seriously because, to the watching world,

I communicate what God looks like. If I call myself a devoted follower of Christ but act like a jerk, I can give others the impression that God is a jerk too. Why would someone want to worship a God whose followers are judgmental or arrogant?

If I'm judgmental, I point to a judgmental God. If I'm apathetic about the lives of others, I point to a distant God who doesn't care. If I'm gracious, I point to a God full of grace. If I'm forgiving toward those who do bone-

headed things, I point to a God who has forgiven all my boneheadedness.

So I make it my goal to live a life of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Gal. 5:22-23), because that is how I want others to see God. That is exactly who He is.

Pryor, online at lynnhpryor.com, is the team leader for ongoing Bible studies at LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention in Nashville. Edited for style.

From time to time, people ask me, "Where in the world do you come up with those articles, those thoughts, week after week after week?" Well, to be honest with you, a few of the ideas have come from inspirational moments I experienced while reading a passage of Scripture or hearing a message or having a thought that obviously did not come from the thought-generating part of my mind but was provided by God.

Oftentimes, the ideas come from you. I don't live my life just walking down the street with folks coming up to me and saying, "Hey, have you ever thought about this?" On the other hand, it is not unusual for me to be talking with someone and they don't even know they're providing a thought that the Lord will shape, trim, expand, and focus.

Today's article entitled, "Waddle, Waddle, Waddle," is not my thought. In fact, the story of the story is interesting in that it came from a Sunday School teacher who, in the process of preparing for his Sunday labor with his class, was talking to another Sunday School teacher from another church who shared with him a thought he read somewhere that somebody else had written. It came from somebody he didn't identify in telling the Sunday School teacher who was his friend who he didn't identify who was telling me the story. This is not mine, and it is not the Sunday School teacher's, and it is not the friend of the Sunday school teacher, but is from somebody who wrote something similar to the truths in this article. You in turn can pass it along anywhere you would like in any way you would like that might bless somebody else or help you or help others to step out there beyond themselves and do what God has created them to do.

The story goes that the ducks were having church on Sunday. Before the service was to begin, they were waddling up to the church. One by one and in groups of families, they waddled up there, waddled through the front door, waddled to their pew, and sat down. It wasn't long before the choir waddled in. They waddled into the choir loft, found



Waddle, Waddle, Waddle

their places, and sat down. The worship leaders including the minister of music and the pastor waddled in to begin the service. It was an inspirational and good service filled with triumphant singing and meaningful praying, an opportunity to give, and an opportunity to be challenged by the Word of God. They absorbed everything that was taking place at the Sunday morning duck worship service.

After a glorious experience on that Sunday, inspirational and uplifting, they had the closing prayer and one by one they waddled out. By the way, the sermon that day was a challenge to all the ducks who learned what God had done for them and how He gifted them and that His intention was for them to use their gifts for His glory.

If there are two outstanding aspects about ducks that all of us recognize, the first is they are super swimmers. They are created that way. The parts of each of their webbed feet press tightly together when the duck pulls them forward so the he/she can pass his/her feet easily through the water, and then those parts fan out to catch the water and push it in a rearward direction to enable him/her to swim forward so gracefully and beautifully. However, when ducks climb up on the bank they don't walk so well across the street or even when going to

church. They waddle, waddle, waddle. They are not graceful. It looks like they all have a genetic or physical problem or had an accident or maybe somebody has done something to them and they can't walk efficiently. No, they're just not using their feet in the environment for which those body parts were created, so they waddle.

On this particular Sunday the pastor waxed eloquent, charging them to see the second gift that every one of them had received: spreading their wings and flying. While a duck in flight doesn't resemble a majestic eagle, they both share that wonderful gift of flight. The preacher that day took the Scriptures related to eagles and applied it to his flock that they "shall mount up with wings as eagles" (Isaiah 40:31). He told them that God had made them to fly. Of all the things a duck has, it's the gift, the wonderful gift, of flying.

You and I see them as they fly south and north and sometimes just hang around during the cold weather because there is enough food here in Mississippi for them, but they are made to fly. To see them flying in the middle of the night illuminated by a full moon and the "V" and "W" shapes they create is an amazing sight as they glide across the dark sky. They can fly. On that Sunday, the ducks came to church, listened, and were chal-

lenged to fly higher and farther than they had ever gone before. When the Amen was said, they waddled out.

For each one of us, the truth from God becomes clearer and clearer. According to Jesus in his amazing parable about the talents, every one of us has received gifts from God. You may be a one-talent person, a two-talent person, a five-talent person, or eventually a ten-talent person, but you have received gifts that came from God. Truthfully, even though we are encouraged, cajoled, pushed, pulled, and begged, sometimes we do not use our gifts. We use them for us occasionally more than we use them for the Maker who gave them to us.

In the parable, one of the talent recipients had only one talent and he buried it. I wonder how many of us have done that. Oh, we didn't take a shovel, turn the dirt, bury it, cover it up. We just hold it close to us and don't let it be used. We ignore the opportunities that come for us to express our one gift, whether that's flying or caring. Truth be known, there are probably many more of us one talent people in the church than there are the ten talent folks. We will applaud the ten talent people, wish we had that gift or those gifts, but the one we have we simply keep it buried or pushed down in our pocket or slipped into our purse and we don't use it.

Here's the most important thing: God has made us who we are and gifted us with what we have. It is not yours. It is certainly not mine, but He calls on us to let Him use us. He may take a sermon and challenge you to let your gift be used, or a song inspires you to let your gift be used, or an article in a paper that says, "Waddle, Waddle, Waddle," and says to you, "I need to do the thing that God gifted me to do." Today, don't lay the paper down and just walk away, waddling down the road. Spread your wings. Let God use the gift that He has given you to touch lives literally in your community and around the world.

The author can be contacted at directions@mccb.org.

Mississippi church hosts poll on election day Nov. 6

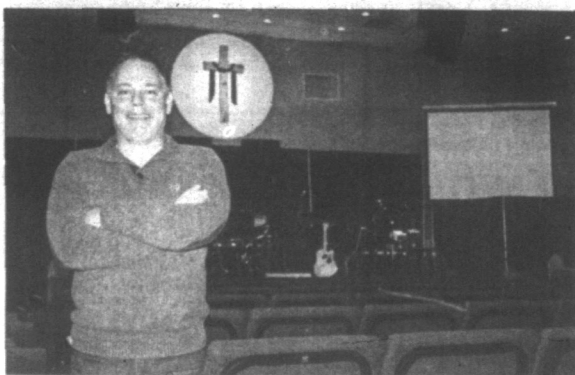
NASHVILLE (BP and local reports) — Praying, offering their church buildings as polling places, and teaching new U.S. citizens to vote were among the ways Southern Baptists served their communities on Election Day.

A number of churches in Mississippi opened their buildings to their communities as polling locations. Among those was Grace Crossing Church in Madison.

"Anytime we can have the community on our campus, we want to welcome them," Grace Crossing pastor Kevin Cooper said, noting the church has passed out bottled water to voters in the past when temperatures rose on Election Day.

In Kentucky, a Southern Baptist pastor who also is a chaplain at the state capitol in Frankfort hosted a 12-hour, come-and-go prayer meeting in the capitol chapel. The gathering's hours paralleled Kentucky's poll hours, 6 a.m.-6 p.m.

"It is calming and reassuring [for voters] to remind them-



KEVIN COOPER

selves that God's still in control and that He's working and that He has a plan," said Steve Weaver, pastor of Farndale Church in Frankfort and state minister for Kentucky through Capitol Commission, a ministry to state and national political leaders.

"Even if we don't understand how [the election] turns out, He's still in control. Going to a place set aside for worship is a good reminder of that."

Judith Piazza, a Kentucky voter who attended the prayer gathering, told Weaver via text, "I needed this time."

"To have the opportunity to petition our God for guidance, mercy, and grace on this very day of choosing our voice in government is a blessing that we let flee from our minds too often," Piazza said in written comments. "To use a chapel on the capitol campus for this occasion brings the price of salvation and freedom to the forefront of my mind and causes me to remember 2 Chronicles 7:14."

In Richmond, Va., at least two churches helped new U.S. citizens navigate the voting process. Grace Community Church ministers to Nepali refugees from Bhutan through a Nepali fellowship in the church. In addition to sharing the Gospel and helping Nepalese families acclimate to the Richmond public schools, the ministry includes instruction in voting and civics, especially when people become U.S. citizens.

Naturalized citizens often ask tactical questions like, "What's a polling place?" said Kevin Larson, chairman of the elders

at Grace Community Church.

The Richmond English Club, a ministry of Staples Mill Road Church in Richmond, has met weekly the past three and a half years in the food court of a local mall. While there, they share the Gospel with immigrants through English conversation practice.

The ministry also includes civics lessons. The program on election eve focused on voting.

"We want them to participate and engage and be comfortable" in the U.S., said ministry coordinator Susan Fogg, a former International Mission Board communications staff member.

One member of the club, Savitra from Nepal, became an American citizen in the past year and voted for the first time Nov. 6. A ministry volunteer drove Savitra by her polling place Nov. 5 to make sure she knew where it was.

"She was so proud last night to raise her hand and say she would be voting today for the first time," Fogg said.

What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the

HOUSE TOPS

Matthew 10:27 NAS

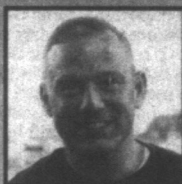
November 15, 2018

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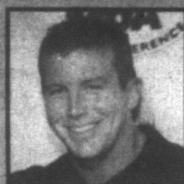
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January is "Make Your Will" month!

Contact the Mississippi Baptist Foundation today to schedule a Legacy Conversation for your church in January. Representatives are available to share in Sunday services and midweek gatherings such as WMU, Brotherhood, senior adults and boomers fellowships. Learn more about what may be the greatest stewardship opportunity of your life – appropriating your estate resources (your "stuff") through your Last Will and Testament.

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LOCATIONS

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Harrisburg Baptist Church
Tupelo, MS

FEBRUARY 12
First Baptist Church
Clinton, MS

FEBRUARY 13
First Baptist Church
Gulfport, MS

Contact the Discipleship and Family Ministry Department at 601-292-3284 or e-mail tpresson@mbcb.org for more information.

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STATE EVANGELISM CONFERENCE

January 27-28, 2019

Country Woods Baptist Church • Byram, MS

"Serve the Lord with gladness; come before His presence with singing."
Psalm 100:2



Contact the Evangelism Department at humis@mbcb.org or call 601-292-3276 for more information.



WTM AWARDS COMPETITION

- Entries in the Awards Competition must have been produced or aired between Jan. 1, 2018 - Jan. 1, 2019
- Award Entry Deadline is Feb. 15, 2019
- Entry form will be online soon
- Entry fee is \$25.00 per entry

WTM BANQUET and WORKSHOPS

May 3-4, 2019

Morrison Heights Baptist Church | Clinton, MS

- Banquet and Workshop Registration Deadline is Apr. 15, 2019
- Registration for all activities (Banquet and Workshop) \$35 per person
- Friday Awards Banquet only or Saturday Workshop only \$25 per person

Sponsored by Communication Services
More information coming soon!

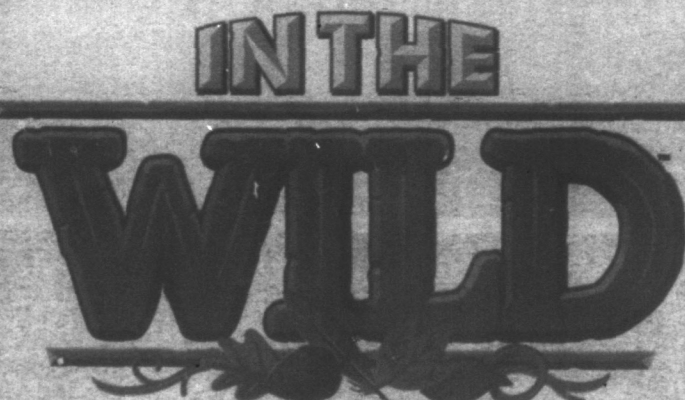


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WITH JESUS
JOHN 20:31

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DISCERN RETREAT

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Garaywa Camp & Conference Center
Patterson Place • Clinton, MS

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for more information.

MCCAF

MISSISSIPPI CHRISTIAN CREATIVE ARTS FESTIVAL

February 22-23, 2019

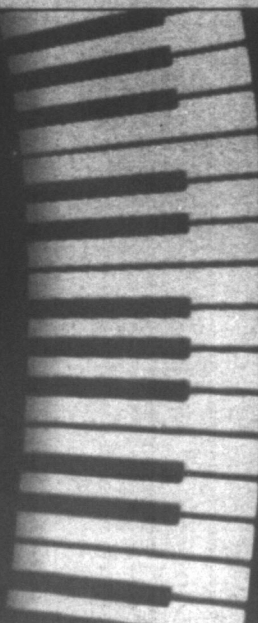
Brandon Baptist Church | Brandon, MS



Contact Discipleship & Family Ministry at redwards@mbcb.org
for more information.

2019

MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST AREA & STATE KEYBOARD FESTIVALS



JANUARY 24, 2019 | 6:30-8:30 P.M.

Area 2 Harrisburg BC, Tupelo
Area 2 FBC, West Point
Area 3 FBC, Jackson
Area 4 Fifteenth Avenue BC, Meridian
Area 5 Main Street BC, Hattiesburg
Area 5 FBC, Summit
Area 5 FBC, Pascagoula
Area 5 FBC, Laurel

JANUARY 25, 2019 | 6:30-8:30 P.M.


Area 2 FBC, Senatobia

JANUARY 26, 2019 | 9:30 A.M.-NOON

Area 1 Emmanuel BC, Grenada
Area 1 North Greenwood BC, Greenwood

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**2019 STATE SENIOR ADULT
EVANGELISM RALLY**


Country Woods Baptist Church | Byram, MS
Tuesday, January 29




Brothers 4 Quartet



Mickey Bounds

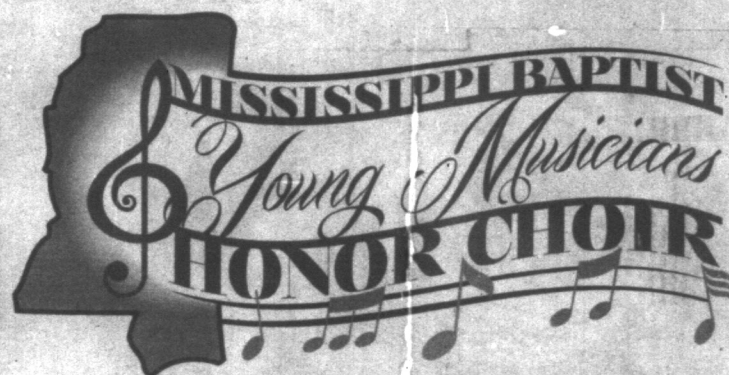


Dennis Swanberg



Voices of Joy

*For questions or more information, contact Discipleship and Family Ministry
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**April 6-7, 2019
EMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH
GRENADA**

**VIDEO Auditions are being accepted for the
2019 Mississippi Baptist Young Musicians Honor
Choir for children in grades 4-6.**

**Videos should be submitted by e-mail or text.
Deadline for submissions is November 15, 2018.**

**Contact Church Music at 601-292-3272 or Wyndy South at
wsouth@mbcb.org for additional information.**

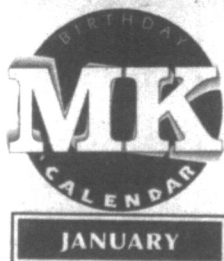
MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST

Symphony Orchestra

MADISON CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL
Band Hall

Friday, January 11 Saturday, January 12
6:30-9:00 p.m. 8:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Contact Church Music at cwtaylor@mbcb.org or 601-292-3267
for more information.



Mr. Titus D.
1/4/12
Parents: K & C
Restricted

Mr. Wyatt
1/4/11
Parents: L & L
Restricted

Mr. Isaac Beaman
1/15/05
Parents: Brad & Lenora
Last Frontier

Mr. Caleb
1/19/12
Parents: R & D
Restricted

Mr. Tate
1/19/12
Parents: L & L
Restricted

To Be Sent December 31, 2018, by the WMU Office



PLEASE NOTE THE TIMING: Thank you for your love and support of MKs by sending Birthday cards! Because of the sending to other countries, there is a need to get cards sent a month ahead of birthday. As soon as the list is in the Baptist Record, please send the cards and not wait until a couple of weeks before the date of the birthday. It is posted two months ahead to give time to receive cards and then to mail them a month ahead of time to insure arrival around birthday. Again, thank you for being a blessing to so many with this ministry!

NOTE: Church members may send a package of cards together; cards do not have to be sent individually to the WMU. Individual cards do not need postage stamps when sent as a package to MS WMU.

FOR SECURITY, cards will be forwarded. Please send all to: MIBC WMU MK Birthdays, PO Box 530, Jackson MS 39205.

Please include your return address on each card envelope. MKs and their parents may wish to send you an update or note of appreciation.

HOUSE TOPS

Just for the Record



ROCKY CREEK CHURCH, LUCEDALE, Historical Committee dedicated their Rocky Creek Baptist Church History book in honor of Mrs. Elsie Harvey. Pictured from left are members of the Historical Committee Billie Tilley, Elsie Harvey, Jan Hilbun and pastor Lee Merck.



Roger Crosswhite, left, presented interim pastor Bob Self a monetary gift for Pastor Appreciation at **LIBERTY HILL CHURCH, POPE.**



FIRST CHURCH, LEAKESVILLE, held an ordination ceremony Nov. 4. Shown are Joni McMillon, Chris McMillon with children Ryder and Hunter, pastor Adam Wyatt, Dillon McInnis, and Malorie McInnis with children Kooper and Chapman.



PARKWAY CHURCH, HOUSTON, ordained Rogers Criddle and David Ellison to the deacon ministry on November 4. Shown are Deneta & Rogers Criddle, pastor Randy Rinehart, and David & Beth Ellison.



JERUSALEM CHURCH, ATTALA, recently honored members who have been teaching Sunday School for several years. Shown are Mary Hodges, Lois Pinkard, pianist Nina Riley, and Eugene Chennault.



HOLLANDALE CHURCH, HOLLANDALE, ordained Howard Christian as deacon Oct. 7. Shown are pastor Dennis Salley, Cindy Christian, and Christian.



FIRST CHURCH, LAKE WASHINGTON, Glen Allan, held a baby dedication. Shown are Erica and Barrett Bruton with their children Jack, Walker, and Eliza Grace with pastor Jimmy McLendon.



FIRST CHURCH, AMORY, honored their pastor, Allen Simpson, with a 20th Anniversary Celebration October 21st. A special service was held Sunday morning and an evening dinner, celebration, and entertainment was also enjoyed by the congregation and his family. Pictured with Simpson is his wife, Cindy.

Staff Changes



EAST UNION CHURCH, MAGNOLIA, has called Glynn and Rachel Thornhill as youth minister.



WEST RIPLEY CHURCH, RIPLEY, has called Caleb Smith, Potts Camp, as student pastor. He comes from Carriage Hills Church. Shown is Randy Jeter, Smith, and pastor Randy Isbell.

IMB

cont. from p. 1

talked, prayed, and thought about Chitwood, "the more the entire committee has come together united in knowing he is God's choice for our next president. He has the biblical foundation, a heart for missions and a proven track record of leading a big organization."

Former Mississippi Baptist pastor Chuck Pourciau, chairman of the presidential search committee and senior pastor of Broadmoor Church in Shreveport, La., echoed Dunbar's endorsement.

"Little did the presidential search committee anticipate the meandering path that would be this search. There were many twists and turns, but our commitment remained singular. It didn't matter what path we took as long as we ended up in the right place. The right place is to locate and recommend to the trustees the person God had already chosen as the next leader of the International Mission Board.

"We are unanimously agreed that we have done just that in recommending to the IMB trustees Dr. Paul Chitwood as our next president. Dr. Chitwood is uniquely qualified to lead us into the next era of Southern Baptists reaching the nations. His missions heart and leadership acumen will serve us well in the years to come.

"I am eager to watch God work through him as he leads our international missions efforts. Yes, brothers and sisters, we did indeed arrive at the right place, and that right place is Dr. Paul Chitwood."

For 18 years, Chitwood served as the pastor of local Kentucky churches:

- First Church, Mt. Washington (2003-11), where he is a member.

- First Church, Somerset (1999-2003).

- First Church, Owenton (1995-99).

- South Fork Church, Owenton (1993-95).

During his pastorates, he served as chairman of the IMB trustees from 2008-10, during his tenure as an IMB trustee from 2002-10. His overseas short-term mission involvement includes work in Brazil, Peru, India, China, South Africa, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Kenya, England, Spain, Germany, and Haiti.

As a pastor, his churches averaged 18.5% giving through the Cooperative Program.

Chitwood was KBC president in 2005-06; KBC's first vice president in 2003-04; and president of the state pastors' conference in 2002. He was chairman of the SBC Committee on Nominations in 2015-16. He also has served on several other state missions committees and on associational leadership committees.

ACQUITTAL

cont. from p. 1

to death Nov. 2 at his home in Rawalpindi, according to World Watch Monitor. He became the first high-profile Bibi supporter to be killed since 2011. The mullah was among leading voices calling for Bibi's release during her eight-year ordeal.

Christians in the 96% Muslim country of about 200 million people are in heightened danger, international religious freedom advocates say. Schools were forced to close, flights were delayed, and trains were forced to change their routes amid unrest, Morning Star News said Nov. 5.

The government reportedly shut down cellular and internet networks in several cities to hamper protests. The announcement of a possible review was deemed the government's attempt to placate protestors largely led by Islamic extremists Tehreek-e-Labbai, Morning Star reported.

Bibi attorney Saif ul-Malook, who fled Pakistan Nov. 3 reportedly for his life, told World Watch Monitor Nov. 5 there is no legal basis for a review of Bibi's acquittal. "There is no new ground available to challenge this decision. I expect the review petition will not be allowed because it will be declared infirm (unfruitful)."

Malook told World Watch he would return to the country to defend Bibi if the review is allowed.

Bibi is still imprisoned, Malook told Morning Star, although the 30-day review process does not require such detention.

Largely known as Asia Bibi, the Catholic mother's formal name is Aasiya Noreen.

Bibi's husband Masih has applied for asylum for the family, petitioning countries including the United States, Great Britain, and Canada, the Guardian reported. The British Pakistani Christian Association, supporting the asylum request, told the Guardian Nov. 3 it was "incredible" no government had stepped forward to help.

Masih requested asylum by video from a safe house, according to news reports.

Bibi was sentenced to death by hanging in 2010 on charges of insulting the Muslim prophet Mohammad. Bibi has refused to renounce her Christianity and convert to Islam.

Pakistani Christian leaders have urged Christians there to pray and "offer themselves to public service" as Bibi is released, Open Doors USA reported upon her acquittal.

Pakistan is the fifth most dangerous country for Christians, Open Doors said in its 2018 Watch List. "They endure persecution from both the state and society," Open Doors has said. "Radical Islamist groups see them as apostates; and their family, friends, and neighbors see their conversion as shameful to the community."

"As a result, many Muslims refuse to drink and eat with them for fear of being defiled."



PROTESTING BIBI — Thousands of protesters filled the streets of several cities in Pakistan, including this unidentified location, to call for a reversal of Asia Bibi's acquittal of blasphemy charges and the reinstitution of her death sentence. (BP screen capture from Twitter)

CLASSIFIEDS

BLOW OUT SALE OUTSIDE ON THE DOCK AT 1325 FLOWOOD DR., ANTIQUE FLEA MARKET, Slidell Treasures By KATHRYN ON FACEBOOK. Nov. 17th 9 am to 5 pm, Nov. 18th, 12 pm to 5 pm.

HAMBURG FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH IS PRAYERFULLY SEEKING A FULL-TIME PASTOR. Please send resume to First Baptist Church Pastor Search Committee, 203 E. Parker St., Hamburg, AR 71646 or email to fbchbg.office@gmail.com. For more information you may call the church office at 870-853-5520.

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BIBL i O C I P H E R

VNBG YGCQU DLZE YG, Z SZW,

NQQZCWPES OZ OVU AZBPSTPEWEGKK:

NQQZCWPES DEOZ OVG YDAOPODWG

ZX OVU OGEWGC YGCQPGK MAZO ZDO

YU OCNEKSCGKPKZEK.

LKNAYK XPXOU-ZEG: ZEG

Clue: Y = M

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: John 20:27

By Charles Marx, 1932-2004, © 2005

MS POSITIONS

HARRISVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH IS SEEKING A BI-VOCATIONAL MUSIC DIRECTOR. send resumes by mail to: Harrisville Baptist Church, PO Box 308, Harrisville, MS 39082. Attn: Music Search Committee or by email to: harrisvillebaptistchurch@yahoo.com

FBC GULFPORT PIANIST NEEDED FOR SUN. SERVICE (9 AM - 10 AM) & WED. NIGHT CHOIR REHEARSAL (6 PM - 7 PM). Must have experience playing for worship services & ability to play a variety of styles of choral music. Degree in piano performance preferred but not required. Compensation commensurate with experience. CALL 228-831-3400 OR EMAIL RESUME: employment@fbcgulfport.org

DREW BAPTIST CHURCH IS SEEKING A BI-VOCATIONAL PASTOR. Please email resume to drewbaptistchurch@gmail.com or U S mail to Drew Baptist Church, 139 S Church St., Drew, MS 38737.

SEEKING A FULL-TIME PASTOR - BETHANY BAPTIST CHURCH. Located at Meridian, MS in the Whynot community of Southern Lauderdale County. Please email resume to office@whynotbethany.org or mail to Bethany Baptist Church, 4475 Ponds Road, Meridian, MS 39301.

SUNRISE BAPTIST CHURCH OF LEAKE CO. IS SEEKING A PART TIME MINISTRY ASSISTANT. If interested please contact Sunrise Baptist Church at 601-298-9977 or email us at sunrisebc21@gmail.com for more info or application.

PINE GROVE BAPTIST CHURCH OF MAGEE IS NOW ACCEPTING RESUMES FOR A BI-VOCATIONAL PASTOR POSITION AND, MINISTER OF MUSIC. Please send resumes to Pine Grove Baptist Church 124 Gather Johnson Rd. Magee, MS 39111 or pinegrove.baptist@att.net.

MINISTER OF MUSIC NEEDED@NEW HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH, MONTICELLO, MS BI-VOCATIONAL/PART TIME JOB. Sundays Only. If interested contact Office @601-587-2862 or send resume to 618 Carmel New Hope Rd, Monticello, MS 39654 or email: nbbc@wb4me.com. College students welcome to apply. References required.

EAST END BAPTIST CHURCH OF COLUMBUS, MS IS CURRENTLY ACCEPTING RESUMES FOR NURSERY WORKERS on Sundays & Wednesdays to care for babies & children through 5 yrs. old. Must be at least 18 years old, child care experience preferred. A background check will be performed. Email resume to office@eastendbc.org.

TRUITT MEMORIAL BAPTIST CHURCH IN PEARL MS IS SEEKING A FULL TIME PASTOR. Please send resume to 3705 Old Brandon Road Pearl MS 39208.

FULL TIME WORSHIP LEADER EXPERIENCED IN CHORAL CONDUCTING FOR SLAYDEN BAPTIST CHURCH. Send resume to Search Committee slaydenbaptist.com or mail to Search Committee, Slayden Baptist Church, 2534 Hwy 72, Lamar, Ms. 38642

With Submission • James 3:13-4:17

James teaches that believers are to be committed to living out God's will. But why? Why can we (Christians) not live the way we want? And who wants to be committed to anything anymore? I mean, Jesus is in my heart, so I won't spend eternity in hell; but committing to do His will every day? Really?

The answer is clear. YES! We are to live out our lives with perseverance, obedience, works, control, AND submission to the will of the Father. James will explain that we should commit to living out God's will through humility, grace, submission, and obedience.

Through Humility (James 4:6-10)

Folks, even with Jesus in our hearts, we are all just one bad choice away from sin and destruction. Think that's not so? I'll give you a couple of examples.

Recently, I was listening to the story of a Christian friend. He told me that it all began with one look. His eyes met her eyes and there was an immediate connection. Over time, they chose to pursue that connection. One bad choice led to another and another. Those choices led to sin which then led to the destruction of his marriage.

Another example comes from one of my guys at Angola. He recounted how his grandmother used to take him to church when he was a boy. One day, with a clear

understanding, he asked Jesus into his heart. In high school, he suffered a football injury that required surgery. The pain pills he received led to a full-blown heroin addiction. One terrible night, in a drugged-out stupor, he killed someone during an armed robbery.

James called on his readers to live a life of humility, emphasizing that they were

not capable of overcoming the devil on their own. Remember, he was speaking to fellow Christians. He directed them to flee the devil so they could purify themselves.

Folks, let's acknowledge that the devil is real. He is a real being who opposes God and his followers. Peter wrote, "Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour" (1 Peter 5:8). While the devil cannot steal your salvation, he can destroy your life.

How do we stop the devil? Peter and James provide our answer. Peter continued, "But resist him (the devil), firm in

your faith..." (v. 9). James wrote, "Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you" (James 4:7). Listen. Instead of pridefully saying, "None of this will happen to me. I'm not going to fall like those other people," we must recognize that only through submitting to God can a person have victory over sin and the devil. We resist the devil, not in our own strength, but

by recognizing our own weaknesses and humbly asking the Lord to help. James wrote, "Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will

exalt you" (v. 10).

Through Grace (James 4:11-12)

While we live out God's will with humility, we also need God's grace. James scolded his readers for criticizing others, acting as a judge. He reminded his readers that they too would be judged by the One who gave the law. When someone falls, do we shake our heads and proclaim that could never happen to us. Do we call our fellow Christians and say, "Have you

heard..."? Instead, believers are to offer grace to others who are struggling with obedience. After all, we could be the ones who have stumbled.

Through Submission (James 4:13-16)

With humility and grace, we also need to submit to God's plan. James questioned his readers' plans that failed to include God in the process. He emphasized that God is in control of history and time. So often we make plans and then ask God to bless them. Instead, believers must seek God's leadership in every area of their lives.

My friends, Rob and Michelle, ask the Lord to show them where to eat lunch. I never thought of that! Instead, I'm thinking about what I want to eat. I do not stop to think that the Lord may have a "God encounter" waiting for me if I will just submit.

Through Obedience (James 4:17)

Finally, James challenged his readers to act on what they knew from God. He explained that failing to act on God's revealed truth was a sin. We too must recognize that God desires His people to be obedient followers.

McGraw is a NAMB-endorsed chaplain at Louisiana State Penitentiary and member of Woodville Church, Woodville.

A Prayer of Confession • Matthew 6:12-13; Psalm 51:1-7, 10-12

King David was a man after God's own heart, according to Acts 13:22b, which reads, "I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will," (KJV). David served the Lord. He also was a sinner, like all of us. We owe a debt to God we cannot pay. Jesus paid for us a debt He did not owe. When the prophet Nathan confronted King David with his sins, he repented and asked the Lord for forgiveness.

The heart of David's regret is revealed in Psalm 51, confessing his sin and asking for restoration. This universal human condition of sin is addressed in the Model Prayer: Matthew 6:12-13 "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen," (KJV). We injure each other and destroy ourselves with sinful desires and actions. Just like King David, everybody needs forgiveness and deliverance from evil.

Last week we studied praying for others. This week we focus on forgiveness, both received from God and given to others. Jesus tied the two together in the Lord's prayer. The two verses immediately following the model prayer read, "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will

also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses," Matthew 6:14-15 (KJV).

Like King David, each person needs forgiveness for sins, and must forgive the sins committed against him or her. Jesus taught here that the two are inseparable. A difficulty with forgiveness is that people continue to sin against us. The Apostle Peter asked Jesus a common question: how much shall

I forgive others? Matthew 18:21-22 reads, "Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him?"

till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven," (KJV). As we are forgiven by God, we must forgive those who sin against us. The original New Testament Greek of Matthew 6:12 (Byzantine Text) states that "forgive our debtors," is in present tense, meaning that forgiveness of

others is ongoing. As the Father continually forgives us our sins, so we are to continually forgive those who wrong us.

Someone said that holding a grudge and not forgiving someone is like drinking poison and hoping the other person becomes ill. Unforgiveness poisons our souls. Jesus knew this and addressed it strongly in the Lord's prayer. God forgives us when we come to Him in repentance. This experience changes us and is called being born again in John 3:3 (KJV).

When we are forgiven by God, we in turn become forgiving people. Ephesians 4:32 teaches, "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you," (KJV).

In Psalm 51, King David's prayer to God asking forgiveness for his sins, he begins by asking for God's mercy. Psalm 51:1 reads, "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according

unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions," (KJV). David acknowledged his sins and asked the Lord to wash him and purge him with hyssop. Hyssop is a mint herb that grows in the middle east. As David asked to be cleansed with hyssop, this foreshadowed the death of Christ. In John 19:29, just before Jesus cried, "It is finished!", the Roman soldiers put vinegar on a branch of hyssop and let Him drink of it. This means that David asked God to cleanse him spiritually, not just cleansing his body, but his soul, (1 Peter 3:21 KJV).

After his confession, David pleaded with God to restore him. Psalm 51:10 reads, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me," (KJV). As Jesus taught us to pray, "lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil," our continuing prayer should be that God helps and teaches us to overcome sin. When our hearts are right with God, we do not cease to sin, but we do cease to desire to sin. God forgives and restores us in Jesus, then we imitate Christ by forgiving others (1 Thessalonians 2:14). To God be the kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever, amen.

Henson is a member of Meadow Grove Church, Brandon.

Bible Studies for Life

with Rick Henson



POLITICS

cont. from p. 1

14 races still undecided, according to CNN.

In the Senate, the GOP appears to have added to its advantage with three races still undecided. Republicans appear likely to add two or three members to their 51-46 lead, CNN reported.

One of the most-watched races in the country is the Mississippi battle between Republican Sen. Cindy Hyde-Smith and Democrat former congressman and U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy. Espy placed first and Hyde-Smith second in the Nov. 6 "jungle primary" to replace the retired Sen. Thad Cochran.

The winner of a Nov. 27 runoff between the two will take the seat

for the remaining two years of Cochran's term. Hyde-Smith was appointed by Gov. Phil Bryant to occupy the seat until the winner is ultimately determined.

Democratic control of the House will place social conservatives at a distinct disadvantage on such issues as abortion and religious freedom, but GOP command of the Senate will provide President Trump with the con-

tinuing opportunity to place justices on the Supreme Court and federal judges nationwide, who interpret the Constitution based on its original meaning.

The Senate narrowly confirmed Neil Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh to the high court in the first two years of Trump's presidency.

"[T]hough the results of elections yesterday resulted in a divid-

ed Congress, our commitments as Christians remain unchanged. We look forward to working with every elected official sent to D.C. as we carry out our mission bearing witness to the Gospel and its implications for the public square," said Russell Moore, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics and Religious Liberty Committee in Nashville, in written comments to Baptist Press.

California Southern Baptists in midst of deadly wildfires

MAGALIA, Calif. (BP) — When one of the deadliest wildfires in state history struck the Northern California town of Magalia, pastor Doug Crowder didn't get to preach his Veterans Day sermon about risking death to save others — he got to live it.

With the Camp Fire speeding toward Magalia in the early hours of Nov. 9, the pastor of Magalia Pines Church, was loading into vehicles about 30 people who had been unable to evacuate the town. They had taken shelter at the church building with him and four other church members.

"We were in the driveway planning to leave," Crowder told Baptist Press through tears, "and the entire world erupted."

There had been no fire in the adjacent businesses or woods, he said, but suddenly "the woods exploded. The Subway restaurant across the street exploded, and on all sides of us was fire."

The church members hurried people back inside the building and prayed while watching flames shoot horizontally between buildings and listening to thousands of gallons of propane detonate at a hardware store next door.

When they emerged the next day, everything around the church had been incinerated but "we were totally unscathed — totally," Crowder said. "The fall leaves were still on the trees" on the church's property.

The Camp Fire began Nov. 8 and quickly leveled Magalia, home to about 12,000 residents 90 miles north of Sacramento, and adjacent Paradise, where about 27,000 people live. The fire's 29 confirmed deaths as of Nov. 12 is equal to the deadliest blaze in California history.

It has destroyed more than 6,700 structures, most of them homes, according to media reports. As of Nov. 11, 228 people



BURNING FAST — Northern California's Camp Fire, with 29 confirmed deaths to date, is among the deadliest wildfires in California history. (BP screen capture courtesy of CBSnews.com)

were still missing in the affected area and flames continued to burn.

Most Magalia and Paradise residents evacuated but Crowder stayed behind to help the elderly, homeless, those without enough gas for their vehicles, and others who couldn't evacuate. With Magalia Pines' building among the only structures in town spared, the congregation hopes to turn the tragedy into a continued ministry opportunity.

"It will be years before it's a town again," Crowder said, "but all through that, our church will be standing and our church will be ministering."

The church facility housed firefighters Sunday night, said Crowder, whose home was destroyed along with the homes of about 75% of the church's 100 attendees. With assistance from the California Southern Baptist Convention (CSBC) disaster relief ministry, Magalia Pines plans to begin feeding the community and helping people clean up as soon as the public is allowed back in town, likely late

this week or early next week.

"This is the worst fire impact" he has seen, said Mike Bivins, CSBC disaster relief director, noting he has been ministering in California since the 1980s.

Disaster Relief workers hoped to take supplies to Magalia Nov. 12, including water and generators. The goal is "to sort of be a community center as people come back in and survey their burned-out property," Bivins said.

Charles Woods, director of missions for the local Sierra Butte Association, told BP three other Southern Baptist churches have been affected by the Camp Fire, with the death of a member reported by at least one of those congregations.

None of the churches lost buildings, but all the pastors' homes were destroyed. Still, the pastors all want "to be able to open those churches up in ministry to the people when they come back in," Woods said.

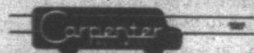
He requested prayer for families of the dead, those who lost all their possessions, and the safety of individuals still missing.

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Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

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Truth is not relative.

Find it in the One who is the way, truth, and life.

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life.

From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Christ today, contact a local Southern Baptist church for spiritual guidance.